watershed due to the large exports of surface water and groundwater by the City of Los Angeles. Arsenic is a health concern in the Owens River basin, and therefore, in Los Angeles as well.

Environmental water supply. Ecosystem protection and restoration efforts are continuing to raise the level of Mono Lake and restore the migratory bird habitat of the South Lahontan Hydrologic Region. In the Owens River basin, plans are to restore surface flows to a 60-mile stretch of the lower river that was dewatered after the Los Angeles Aqueduct was completed in 1913. This ambitious restoration project will return live flows to the riverbed on a year-round basis, rebuild the riparian habitat, and reintroduce fish and other native wildlife. At the lower end of this 60-mile stretch, the remaining water would be recaptured and returned to the Los Angeles Aqueduct.

Colorado River Hydrologic Region

Water supply reliability. One of the most significant challenges of this region will be adapting to requirements of the new Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) for distribution and use of California's legal entitlement of Colorado River water (DWR 2003). Under this 2003 agreement California agencies must reduce total consumptive use of Colorado River water to 4.4 million acre-feet per year; past usage often exceeded 5.0 maf/year. The QSA also assists the transfer of water to meet urban needs in the South Coast region and water for the Salton Sea. Other regional issues include the potential impacts of Colorado River fish restoration programs on the availability of water for diversions and the development of solutions to groundwater overdraft problems in the upper (urbanized) and lower (agricultural) part of the Coachella Valley.

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Water quality. The Colorado River provides irrigation and domestic water to much of Southern California. The water's salinity (generally between 760 to 950 parts per million) is a concern for salt-sensitive crops; and municipal water agencies blend this supply with low salinity water ~~groundwater~~ supplies, including groundwater (except in the Imperial Valley which lies above a saline aquifer). ~~except in the Imperial Valley~~. Low levels of perchlorate in the Colorado River, originating in the Las Vegas Wash, and high levels of hexavalent chromium in wells at Needles near the river, are recent concerns for drinking water quality. Septic systems at recreational areas along the Colorado River are also a water quality concern for both domestic and recreational water uses.

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Ecosystem restoration. Salton Sea is the focus of international water quality and ecosystem restoration efforts in Southern California. An important stop along the Pacific Flyway, the saline and eutrophic Sea supports a productive fishery and more that 400 species of resident and migratory birds, of which more than 50 have status as threatened, endangered, or species of concern. The largest sources of the Sea's inflow are the New River, which originates in, and conveys industrial and agricultural wastes from Mexico into the United States; the Alamo River, which also originates south of the border and consists mainly of agricultural return flows from the Imperial Valley; and the Imperial Valley agriculture drains, which contribute pesticides, nutrients, selenium, and silt to the Sea. Nutrient input to the sea can contribute to algal blooms and odors, and lead to low dissolved oxygen conditions that are dangerous to fisheries. If a solution is not developed and begun soon, Salton Sea may become too saline to support most of the fish and the associated bird populations.

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